



WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Walter P. Reuther Library

Guide to the Blanding Sloan Papers LP000674

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on August 25, 2020.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Walter P. Reuther Library

5401 Cass Avenue

Detroit, MI 48202

URL: <https://reuther.wayne.edu>

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Summary Information

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|----------------------------------|--|
| Repository: | Walter P. Reuther Library |
| Title: | Blanding Sloan Papers |
| ID: | LP000674 |
| Date [inclusive]: | 1928-1939 |
| Physical Description: | 1 Linear Feet (1 MB, 1 OS) |
| Language of the Material: | English |
| Language of the Material: | Material entirely in English. |
| Abstract: | Blanding Sloan was a puppeteer, theater designer, playwright, printmaker and director who was involved with the marionette program of the Federal Theatre Project (FTP), one of the cultural programs of the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. His papers reflect his involvement with the FTP in San Francisco and with the Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association. |

Citation Style

"Blanding Sloan Papers, Box [#], Folder [#], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University."

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History

(James) Blanding Sloan (1886-1975) was a puppeteer, theater designer, playwright, printmaker and director. In 1928-1929, he directed the Marionette Theatre of San Francisco, which was organized with the purpose of expanding the art of puppetry in the San Francisco Bay area. In the 1930s, Sloan was involved with the marionette program of the Federal Theatre Project (FTP), one of the cultural programs of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) created in 1935. Under the direction of Hallie Flanagan and comprising a series of regional theaters headed by professional directors, this first government-sponsored theater in American history created jobs for 10,000 unemployed actors and theater technicians in forty states. Over four years, the FTP produced more than 2,700 plays, most dealing with the social and economic issues of the New Deal. Within the FTP, there were 22 marionette units; they were an

integral part of the FTP and were extremely popular. In 1936, Sloan directed the Los Angeles County Marionette Theatre, an FTP program, and in 1939, he was the director of the eastern region of the FTP. Throughout its life, foes of the FTP attacked it as being propagandistic. Investigated by the Dies House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1939, the FTP was the first of the New Deal cultural programs to be abolished when Congress eliminated funds for its continuation in the WPA appropriations bill that year. Blanding Sloan was also involved in the Arts and Professions Co-operative, Unit 77 of the Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association (UCDA) of Los Angeles in 1934. While with the UCDA, Sloan illustrated its journal "The Clarion."

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Scope and Content

The papers of Blanding Sloan reflect his work in puppetry in San Francisco and in the Federal Theatre Project, and, to a lesser extent, his involvement with the Unemployed Cooperative Distribution Association. They cover the period from 1928-1939.

The collection includes yearbooks, leaflets, scripts, musical scores and other items used by Blanding Sloan in the Marionette Theatre of San Francisco in the 1920s and during his involvement with the Federal Theatre Project in the 1930s. Included in this series is information on the history of the FTP, other programs under the WPA, puppet and marionette programs throughout the country, and the creation of marionettes and stages. It also contains information on the Arts and Professions Co-operative, Unit 77 of the Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association of Los Angeles. Important subjects covered in this collection are: History of the Federal Theatre Project. Marionette design and construction. Unemployed Cooperative Distribution Association.

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Arrangement

The folders are arranged alphabetically by type of material except for three folders containing leaflets and a musical score, which are stored in an oversize box.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Acquisition

The papers of Blanding Sloan were deposited in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in September 1974 by Taylor Sloan and were opened for research in October 1984.

Processing History

Processed and finding aid written by Walter P. Reuther Library in October 1984.

Access

Collection is open for research.

Use

Refer to the Walter P. Reuther Library "Rules for Use of Archival Materials."

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Related Materials

Transfers

Approximately 35 photographs relating to marionette construction and scenes from marionette productions, and six woodcuts done by Blanding Sloan depicting co-operative organizations on the West Coast, have been placed in the Reuther Audiovisual Department.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Theater
- Music
- Seeger, Pete, 1919-2014
- United States. Works Progress Administration
- Federal Theatre Project (U.S.)

Collection Inventory

| Title/Description | Instances | |
|---|-----------|--------------|
| Invitations, 1930 | box 1 | folder 1 |
| Journals, The Clarion, 1934 February | box 1 | folder 2 |
| Journals, Federal Theatre, 1936 April | box 1 | folder 3 |
| Leaflets, Unemployed Co-operative Distribution Association, undated | box 1 | folder 4 |
| Musical Score, Created Equal, undated | box 1 | folder 5-9 |
| Programs, 1939 | box 1 | folder 10 |
| Puppet Stage Design, undated | box 1 | folder 11 |
| Scripts, Created Equal, 1938 | box 1 | folder 12 |
| Scripts, 1001 Puppet Plays, 1938 | box 1 | folder 13 |
| Yearbooks, 1930, 1939, 1944-1945 | box 1 | folder 14-16 |
| Leaflets, Marionette Theatre of San Francisco, 1928-1929 | box 2 | folder 1 |
| Musical Score, Genesis, 1936 | box 2 | folder 2-3 |